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ABSTRACT

This document articulates the guiding principles of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) for the creation, adoption, and implementation of higher education policy. The policy positions of the AASCU are founded on a commitment to supporting and advancing the best interests of students. Among the ideals on which the AASCU public policy agenda is based is the belief that higher education is a common good, the burden of which should be borne in an equitable manner by all beneficiaries. Policies are outlined for: (1) student financial aid; (2) national security and internationalization; (3) tax policy; (4) science and research; (5) teacher preparation, development, and support; (6) access and inclusion; (7) economic and workforce development; and (8) governance. (SLD)

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January 2002

Public Policy Agenda

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American Association of State Colleges and Universities

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FROM AASCU'S PRESIDENT

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to present to you the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' (AASCU) *2002 Public Policy Agenda.* AASCU regularly reviews its guiding philosophy and priorities, and defines the principles that will guide its advocacy efforts on behalf of public higher education at both the state and federal levels. These principles comprise the *2002 Public Policy Agenda.*

The events of last September have irrevocably changed the nation's policy landscape, and our campuses have not been left untouched by that change. The *2002 Public Policy Agenda* acknowledges the emerging demands of a changed world, while remaining faithful to our central task–meeting the needs of the nation's students.

Moreover, the reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act will soon be at hand, which will also bring change to the higher education policy world. Again, AASCU will approach reauthorization deliberations with the best interests of our students foremost in mind.

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) have endorsed AASCU's *2002 Public Policy Agenda.* I am pleased to include letters of support from their respective presidents.

Sincerely,

Constantine W. Curris
President

NASULGC's Endorsement

NASULGC National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

December 18, 2001

Dr. Constatine W. Curris
President
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW, 5 th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

I am pleased to announce NASULGC's support of AASCU 's *2002 Public Policy Agenda.*

As a sister association in advancing the work of public colleges and universities, this document delineates the key policy issues we must monitor and advocate around in the coming year. Foremost among these are student financial aid, tax policy, and teacher preparation. I am especially pleased that these policy goals reinforce and contribute to the role played by the Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges that operates in cooperation with AASCU.

Best of luck as you work to advance these priorities, and public higher education, I the months ahead. We stand ready to assist you in these efforts.

Cordially,

Peter

C. Peter Magrath
President

HACU's Endorsement

November 30, 2001

HACU

Dr. Constantine W. "Deno" Curris
President
American Association of State
Colleges & Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005-4701

Dear Deno:

I appreciate receiving an advance copy of AASCU's *2002 Public Policy Agenda*, and am pleased to inform you that the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) supports this agenda.

As evident from this document, AASCU and HACU share some important higher education advocacy priorities, including targeting federal and state aid to needy students and higher education access and inclusion. Also, it is encouraging that this agenda supports increased funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions. The *2002 Public Policy Agenda* provides ready guidelines for advancing these and other public higher education priorities.

Thank you for your leadership role in identifying and disseminating AASCU's advocacy priorities through the *2002 Public Policy Agenda*. We look forward to partnering with you on issues of shared concern in the year ahead.

Cordially,

Antonio R. Flores
President and Chief Executive Officer

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APAHE's Endorsement

December 19, 2001

Apahe
Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education

Dr. Constantine W. Curris
President
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW • Fifth floor
Washington, DC 20005-4701

Dear Dr. Curris:

I am pleased to inform you that the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) voted to endorse the *2002 Public Policy Agenda* of the AASCU at its November 17, 2001, meeting in New York. We wish to commend the AASCU for developing the higher education policy agenda and providing leadership in advocating the policy agenda at the nation's capital.

In making the endorsement, APAHE also wishes to urge the AASCU and its 430 affiliated public universities and colleges to recognize the significant presence and contributions of Asian Americans in these institutions and the importance of attending to the particular needs and interests of Asian American students, most of whom come from immigrant and non-English-speaking backgrounds. APAHE further urges the AASCU and its member institutions to provide equal employment opportunity to Asian Americans, especially in campus administration and faculty appointments.

APAHE stands ready to work with AASCU in advancing the 2002 agenda and to assist its member institutions in working on the issues raised above.

Sincerely,

Tim T. L. Dong
President

INTRODUCTION

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is comprised of more than 450 public colleges, universities and systems of public higher education located throughout the United States and its territories. These institutions enroll more than three and a quarter million students, representing more than half of all students enrolled in public four-year institutions. In addition, AASCU members award 36 percent of the nation's bachelor's degrees, 27 percent of its master's degrees, and 8 percent of all doctorates. AASCU member institutions educate a majority of the nation's undergraduate students who are preparing for a career in teaching.

One of AASCU's primary functions in the policy process is to facilitate communication between its members and policymakers. At the federal level, AASCU acts both in collaboration with and on behalf of its members in working with Congress and the executive branch. AASCU members are kept apprised of actions in Washington, and their views and concerns are clearly communicated in the nation's capital. At the state level, AASCU carefully monitors developing policy trends, promoting policies that advance the principles espoused by the membership and criticizing policies inimical to those principles. AASCU's policy statement regarding governance is one example of this activity.

In the year 2002 and beyond, AASCU will focus on shaping federal and state higher education policy by advocating for the distinctive attributes and contributions of its member institutions. AASCU will undertake this task mindful of a dramatically changed policy landscape. While policymakers and higher education leaders must continue to grapple with the demands of rapidly changing economic and demographic forces, they now must wrestle with unprecedented questions of national security and public safety. Additionally, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the law governing the bulk of federal higher education policy, will begin to take shape in the year ahead. Finally, the combination of rising enrollment and shrinking revenues will test many states. In short, 2002 promises to be a challenging year in higher education policy, and AASCU stands ready to work with federal and state policymakers to act in the best interests of students over the course of the coming year.

The *2002 Public Policy Agenda* articulates AASCU's guiding principles in the creation, adoption, and implementation of higher education policy. This document is a ready reference for members of the academic community, federal and state governments, and other concerned parties.

AASCU's policy positions are founded on an uncompromising commitment to support and

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

advance the best interests of students. The *Public Policy Agenda*, therefore, is premised on the following ideals:

Higher education is a common good that serves the interests of society and provides individual benefits to students. While the individual gains from higher education are well-documented, the societal benefits are even greater. These include not only such tangible national dividends as enhanced national productivity and increased tax revenues but, even more profoundly, the fostering of an enlightened citizenry and greater social cohesion.

America's public higher education system is the embodiment of the nation's democratic ideals. State colleges and universities, by educating the majority of American students, exemplify this nation's unique efforts to provide access to higher education for as many of its citizens as possible.

State colleges and universities are committed to providing access to quality undergraduate and graduate programs, to serving as responsible stewards of the public's investment and trust, and to engaging meaningfully in the economic and social issues facing the communities and states of which they are a part. Additionally, these institutions are committed to providing access in settings that best meet the needs of their students, be they on-campus, off-campus, or on-line.

The burden of investing in public higher education should be borne in an equitable manner by all beneficiaries. Financing public higher education is the shared responsibility of students, families, and federal and state governments.

The primary function of federal financial aid is to guarantee access to higher education; this aid should be directed to the individual. Federal Pell Grants exemplify aid directed to the individual.

The primary purpose of state appropriations is to keep student tuition as low as possible to ensure access by resident students and to preserve programmatic quality and integrity; these appropriations should be directed to the institution. Low tuition is the most effective guarantee of access for all and is essential to a broadly educated citizenry.

Families should be encouraged and empowered to assume their share of, and save for, the higher education expenses of their children.

No American should be denied the opportunity to pursue higher education for lack of financial resources. Affordable public sector tuition and need-based federal aid are the two requisite ingredients of realizing this ideal.

Student Financial Aid

Just over a half-century ago, American higher education was transformed by the GI Bill and its underlying premise of the federal government providing significant financial assistance to college students. Today, the student financial aid provided by federal and state governments stands as the most prominent symbol of the nation's commitment to higher education opportunity. Student financial aid programs at all levels of government enjoy broad bipartisan support. This commitment will be tested, however, by the further democratization of higher education, and particularly the influx of students from historically underrepresented populations. If the nation is to uphold its commitment to democracy through higher education opportunity, policies must be pursued that will advance that ideal.

Federal Issues

AASCU's oversight of federal student financial aid policy involves the authorization, appropriation and regulatory processes.

Authorization

The programs authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965 constitute the foundation of the long standing federal commitment to assist students to finance a college education. In the coming year, AASCU will begin to identify and formulate recommendations for the 2003 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). These policy recommendations will address issues such as Pell Grants, student loans, accountability, degree attainment, return of Title IV funds, and non-traditional programs.

Appropriation

Grant and work-study funds authorized by the HEA are part of the federal domestic discretionary budget. These programs will help students only if they receive adequate funding through the annual appropriations process.

Regulation

AASCU is actively involved in the negotiated rulemaking process, which the HEA now requires the U.S. Department of Education to use in developing all regulations for the student aid programs authorized by the HEA. AASCU regularly monitors federal regulations that might create individual inequities or unduly burden member institutions.

AASCU will continue to work with Congress, the administration, students, and other higher education groups to advance the following policy priorities through the proper venues.

Need-Based Grants and Work Study

Need-based student aid is AASCU's highest priority. Unlike federal loans, which are funded as entitlements, federal grant and work study dollars are discretionary budget items. Therefore, Congress appropriates funding for these items on an annual basis. AASCU believes that need-based aid programs, particularly Pell Grants, are the most efficient and effective delivery mechanisms for ensuring broad higher education access. In a time when competition for economic resources is intensifying and the benefits of higher education are increasingly being viewed in individual rather than societal terms, advocacy for need-based programs is more critical than ever.

Pell Grants

The Federal Pell Grant program is the cornerstone of the federal government's student financial assistance programs. The program provides need-based grant aid to millions of low- and moderate-income students, and, at a funding level of approximately $10.5 billion for fiscal year 2002, is the largest discretionary federal student aid program. For more than a quarter-century, Pell Grants have been instrumental in helping millions of Americans attend college.

Despite its proven track record of success, the Pell Grant program has not consistently received the appropriations necessary to fund either the authorized increases in program funding or the funding needs created by enrollment increases. Authorizing committees have increased the maximum allowable award levels in each reauthorization, in the hope that appropriations committees could follow through with substantial additional funding. Although the Pell Grant program has received sizable funding increases in recent years, these increases fail to make up for lost purchasing power due to increases in college costs and do not adequately address the large increases in the number of students newly eligible for Pell.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for significant increases in the Pell Grant maximum award as the most effective way to ensure access for the nation's neediest students and to address the growing imbalance between grants and loans as a percentage of total federal financial aid awarded.

Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)/College Work Study (CWS)

The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and College Work Study (CWS) programs also provide essential need-based funding, enabling financial aid administrators to reduce loan burden and target grant and work assistance to the neediest students.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for significant increases in SEOG and CWS programs as essential elements of federal need-based aid. Further, AASCU encourages its member institutions to

maintain their commitment to applying a portion of their CWS funding to support the America Reads program.

Student Loans

Loan Limits and Debt Burdens

Over more than three decades since the inception of the student loan program, both the number of borrowers and amounts borrowed have increased in an alarming manner.

Since federal loan programs are entitlements, no annual appropriations are necessary, and there are no appropriation limits on increases in federal borrowing. The creation of the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan program in 1992 paved the way for a significant increase in debt levels for all students, particularly independent undergraduate and graduate students. That program is less costly to the federal government than the Subsidized Stafford Loan program, but more expensive for students because it does not pay students' loan interest while they are in school.

Even more ominously, loans are increasingly being taken out by students for whom they were never intended, i.e., the neediest and the most at-risk. The gradual shift from grant aid to loan aid that policymakers pledged to reverse in 1992 has instead accelerated in the direction of more borrowing.

Unfortunately, student and parent use of consumer debt and alternative private loan programs is also increasing rapidly, as lenders market loans to families and students for whom federal grants and existing loan limits in federal programs are not sufficient. In the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, there will be pressure for increased loan limits, particularly for first-year students. An increase in freshman loan limits in the Subsidized Stafford program would, however, be very costly under federal budget rules. Therefore, there may be pressure for an increase in the Unsubsidized Stafford program, so that students and families at least have recourse to the lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options in the federal loan programs.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will work actively in each legislative cycle to increase grants and minimize the need for student borrowing, and to assure that any increases in federal loan limits are accompanied by low interest rates and flexible repayment options for students.

Loan Program Structure: Implications for Repayment

The 1998 HEA reauthorization maintained the two currently available federal loan programs:

The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan program, which uses federal capital for loans; and

The Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program, which provides government-guaranteed private loans.

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

AASCU's main concern is to ensure institutional and student choice in the loan system. The ability of institutions to decide which of the two loan programs best serves their students has injected a measure of market competition into the system, and has prompted the loan industry and the Department of Education to improve quality of service as a means of attracting institutions. The loan consolidation program in direct lending allows borrowers to "refinance" their guaranteed loans into the direct loan program in repayment, thereby providing access to income-contingent repayment if needed.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU advocates the continued availability of both direct and government-guaranteed loans, based on school choice on the front end, and based on borrower choice upon entry into repayment. AASCU will advocate appropriate improvements that would render these programs more beneficial to borrowers and less cumbersome for institutions. In addition, the association will oppose all efforts to undermine either program by opposing all legislative and regulatory provisions that would impose artificial disadvantages on the efficient operation of each.

Terms and Conditions

Because of the increasing reliance on student loans, especially by those students most at risk financially, AASCU is committed to working for borrower terms and conditions in the federal loan programs that protect the interests of students and their families.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU advocates the elimination of all up-front fees for borrowers in both loan programs. The association will voice strong support for all legislative efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate this hidden tax on students.

AASCU will continue to advocate for low-interest-rate student loans, and will oppose any efforts to increase the cost of educational borrowing. AASCU will continue its efforts to obtain the best possible interest rate on consolidation loans, and will pursue federal policies that provide the broadest set of consolidation options for borrowers.

AASCU is committed to improving repayment options in both federal loan programs, and is supportive of income-contingent repayment as an option in the direct loan program. The loan industry should be encouraged to offer innovative repayment plans in the federal guaranteed loan program, subject to basic consumer protection measures to ensure that borrowers are not burdened with excessive negative amortization.

Federal Subsidies to Lenders

Currently, the HEA guarantees lenders in the FFEL program a rate of return that is significantly higher than the interest rate paid by students. The federal

payments providing this higher rate of return (called special allowance payments) are entitlements to lenders. Under the statute, special allowance payments will no longer be paid on new guaranteed loans after 2003.

Lenders are calling for the law to be changed before the next HEA reauthorization to allow the continuation of these payments on new loans. Because the FFEL program is an entitlement, or mandatory program, such a change in law would be subject to the federal budget rules, which require a statutory change to reduce spending in another federal entitlement program to offset the continuation of the special allowance payments to lenders. Based on current interest rate and volume, the offset required could total up to $10 billion over the next decade.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will object to proposals to finance lender subsidies that either reduce benefits or increase costs to students, and supports inclusion of student groups in developing a compromise with lenders to resolve the "03" issue.

Gatekeeping, Accreditation and Program Integrity

The current framework for ensuring program integrity in federal student aid programs has evolved over the three decades of the programs' existence, and consists of a patchwork of statutory and regulatory provisions that were often created in response to specific problems. There are a large number of federal provisions in statute and regulation aimed at strengthening program integrity and curbing waste, fraud, and abuse.

AASCU strongly advocates for a reduction in the number and scope of federal regulations. AASCU believes that the current "one size fits all" approach to gatekeeping and oversight should be replaced by a system of equitable and appropriate regulation of participating institutions by type and control. Such an approach would allow the Department of Education to focus its limited enforcement resources on problem schools, and alleviate the unnecessary burdens imposed on other institutions.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU advocates the retention of the federal requirement that all institutions be accredited as a condition of participating in Title IV programs. Voluntary accreditation has proven to be an important safeguard against abuse in the case of traditional colleges and universities. AASCU will continue to support the Council on Higher Education Accreditation's efforts to ensure that accreditation remains voluntary.

AASCU will work with the Congress, other members of the higher education community, and with student and consumer advocacy groups to ensure that program integrity provisions are streamlined and strengthened. Specifically, the use of accreditation coupled with appropriate program performance criteria would be preferable to the current

pattern of micro-management of institutions by the federal government.

AASCU will advocate the removal of regulatory and statutory obstacles to student eligibility for federal aid for non-traditional programs, including distance learning, and the streamlining of the delivery of aid for these programs.

Performance Based Organization for Student Aid Management

The 1998 HEA reauthorization made major changes to the structure of the Department of Education with the creation of a new Performance Based Organization (PBO) within the Department for the management of student financial assistance. The PBO is an important concern for the association, as is the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE). OPE is separate from the PBO and is headed by the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, who oversees policy development for all higher education programs and the operation of non-student aid programs.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will closely monitor the efforts of the PBO in modernizing the delivery system, as well as the interaction between the PBO and OPE, whose functions are often difficult to separate.

Preview—Higher Education Act Reauthorization

AASCU will initiate discussions with its members, colleagues, and congressional and agency staff in preparation for the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. AASCU has identified several issues likely to surface in the next reauthorization.

Pell Grants: General

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will advocate for making the Pell Grant program an entitlement. The recurring Pell Grant surpluses and shortfalls are symptoms of the need for mandatory funding not dependent on annual appropriations.

Pell Grants: Tuition Sensitivity

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports the continuation of existing tuition sensitivity provisions, which curtail Pell Grant increases for students in institutions with very low tuition/fees.

Pell Grants: Additional Awards

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will support expanded authority for students enrolled in programs offering more than one academic year of study during one calendar year. Institutions are beginning to offer such programs in order to permit students to complete a degree more rapidly, such programs being less expensive for the institution, and requiring less borrowing for the student.

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Student Loans: Origination Fees

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will advocate for the total elimination of origination fees, which represent an unfair tax on student borrowers.

Student Loans: Increased Borrowing Limits

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will review options for making increased amounts of subsidized borrowing available so that students do not have to resort to private loans to finance their postsecondary expenses. These options will include raising first year Stafford loan limits, and modifying the Perkins loan program to make it a more viable adjunct to the Direct Loan program and the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program.

Student Loans: Defaults

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports changes to the federal loan programs to eliminate default by ensuring that the Department of Education, the guaranty agencies, and the lenders maintain contact with all borrowers after they leave college, and place borrowers in an appropriate repayment program. AASCU further supports changes to the FFEL program to reduce guaranty agency reliance on collections as a basic financing mechanism, and emphasize default avoidance as the primary mission of these agencies.

Return of Title IV Funds

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports revisions to the current statute, which is unduly harsh on many high-risk, low-income students who used federal funds to attempt postsecondary education. These revisions include: (1) allowing students one penalty free withdrawal; (2) clarifying that 50 percent of grant funds received are protected for students who withdraw more than once; (3) prohibiting the Department of Education from issuing regulations on the date of withdrawal; (4) giving aid administrators authority to make late disbursements; (5) establishing a $100 *de minimis* amount that institutions and students would not have to return; (6) prohibiting the Department of Education from issuing guidance on tracking potential overpayment of awards until the National Student Loan Data System clearinghouse is fully operational; and (7) giving institutions discretion to treat leaves of absence in accordance with their own policies.

Non-traditional Programs

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports a thorough review of the current statute and regulations affecting eligibility for and delivery of Title IV aid for students enrolled in non-traditional programs, including distance education. Existing regulatory and statutory attempts to use time limits as a proxy for academic quality should be reconsidered.

Institutional Ownership and Control

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports clarification of institutional ownership provisions in the HEA to underscore their non-applicability to non-profit public and private institutions.

Non-Germane Student Aid Eligibility Requirements

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports the elimination of non-germane aid eligibility requirements, such as those related to drug convictions and Selective Service registration.

Federal/State Issues

Leveraging Education Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) Program

Formerly known as the State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) Program, LEAP provides a relatively small but important incentive for states to maintain or bolster their need-based grant efforts. In recent years, federal policymakers have increasingly questioned the continued need for the program, pointing out that nearly every state now has a need-based grant program and that states have substantially increased their spending on these grants since the advent of SSIG. The vast majority of state-level need-based spending, however, is concentrated in a handful of states, and many states rely on LEAP to supplement their modest aid efforts.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will work to maintain or increase funding for the LEAP program, and will oppose efforts to scale back or discontinue it. Additionally, AASCU urges Congress to consider changes in the program's formula that strengthens incentives for states that currently provide little or no funding for need-based student aid.

State Issues

Trends in State Student Aid

Over the past generation, state efforts to provide financial aid to college students have evolved considerably. Within the past decade, a "new generation" of state student aid programs has emerged, emphasizing academic achievement and middle-class affordability over financial need. Indeed, the share of state student aid devoted to non-need-based programs has nearly doubled over the past decade. As colleges and universities that have historically been charged with preserving access to higher education opportunity, AASCU institutions stand to be especially impacted by the continuing philosophical shift in state aid to students.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU believes that states should establish and maintain grant and scholarship programs that balance the desire to reward performance and provide incentives with the very real need to extend higher education opportunity to the economically disadvantaged and other

historically underrepresented groups. Specifically, AASCU believes that any state student aid program should be structured according to the following principles:

Equity—Treating similarly situated individuals similarly, and differently situated individuals appropriately.

Effectiveness—Achievement of intended objectives.

Efficiency—Achievement of intended objectives with minimal "deadweight loss" (i.e. targeting programs to students with the greatest need, administering programs to minimize overhead and maximize awards to students).

Additionally, states should take care to develop aid programs that fit their particular situations, and that work in concert with federal and institutional aid initiatives.

National Security and Internationalization

In recent years, American colleges and universities have faced increasing demand to become more internationally oriented. Rapidly emerging technologies, evolving trade relationships, and growing cultural awareness have accelerated this demand.

The dramatically renewed specter of terrorism, however, requires the nation to take unprecedented measures to protect its citizens while remaining globally engaged. Higher education institutions, with their historical commitment to plurality and diversity, as well as their long-standing contributions to the nation's defense, stand at the crossroads of these demands.

Accordingly, policymakers and higher education leaders must forge a new level of partnership to ensure that campuses provide appropriate support for security efforts and continue their work toward greater linkage with the international community.

Federal Issues

Immigration and Visa Control of Foreign Students

One of the effects of the events of September 11 is a re-examination of the nation's immigration laws and policies. The process of approving students for study in the United States is receiving particular scrutiny from Congress, as is the monitoring of these students once they arrive.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU supports the modernization of the nation's visa system, including the adoption of appropriate biometrics (i.e., fingerprinting and more technologically advanced methods) that identify visa holders. AASCU also supports federal funding for the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), and believes that entities other than campuses should be charged with collecting any SEVIS related fees assessed to students. AASCU further opposes the adoption of a blanket moratorium on the issuance of new student visas.

AASCU will advocate for legislation and regulations that streamline the visa process for students, faculty, and administrators. Similarly, AASCU will work to simplify federal regulations that hinder the successful development of international programs or severely restrict the access of foreign students to American institutions.

Internationalization

While the events of September 11 have underscored the need for strong homeland security and

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

national defense, they have also powerfully reminded the nation of its inextricable relationships with the world community, as well as the vital importance of better awareness and understanding of its global neighbors. AASCU strongly believes that higher education institutions, as primary agents of intellectual and cultural exchange, must maintain and enhance their international outlook in the world that is emerging.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU's Policy focus for internationalization will center on those activities that create:

New opportunities for students from AASCU campuses to study or work abroad, to increase the diversity of students that major in international fields and foreign languages or pursue careers in international service,

New opportunities for faculty and administrators from AASCU campuses to study or conduct research abroad and seek to develop a high level proficiency in foreign languages, international and area studies,

Increased opportunities for AASCU campuses to host students and faculty from abroad for study, research and teaching, and to expand the international knowledge of faculty and graduate students in professional and technical fields such as business, education, environment, economics, health and information technology, and

Enhanced foreign language and area studies offerings through an expansion in the capacity of colleges and universities to maintain and update international knowledge in a wide range of disciplines and fields that are vital to the nation's interests and economic competitiveness.

AASCU supports federal legislation that gives authorizing and funding priority to programs that facilitate student, faculty, and administrator exchanges and study abroad.

AASCU encourages immediate attention to policy measures that provide reassurances for international students concerned about their safety and well being, and a reaffirmation of the importance of international study and exchanges.

AASCU supports the development of a presence before federal, state, and regional entities in matters associated with international education policies and programs, particularly those that benefit member institutions and their students, faculty, and administrators. AASCU will continue to actively participate in the Coalition for International Education, which supports legislation and increased appropriation for three important international programs managed by the

Department of Education: Title VI, Fulbright-Hays, and the Institute for International Public Policy.

Support for Military Personnel

State colleges and universities have a proud history of supporting the nation's military personnel, as demonstrated by AASCU's special relationship with Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges. AASCU will work with the military to ensure that servicemembers receive the education and training they need to face the demands of a constantly changing world.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports expanding ROTC programs and the fulfillment of the nation's obligations to its military personnel, especially with respect to the Montgomery GI Bill.

Federal/State Issues

Treatment of Students Called to Protective Duty

In the wake of recent events, the demand for military, police, and other protective service personnel has risen sharply. As local, state, and federal policymakers develop long-term strategies for promoting national security and public safety, campuses nationwide—and their students—will undoubtedly be affected.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU strongly urges federal and state governments, as well as institutions of higher education, to adopt and uphold policies that permit maximum flexibility and discretion—with appropriate accountability—in meeting the educational and financial aid needs of students called to military or other protective service. This includes, but is not limited to: refund of tuition and other institutional charges, return of financial aid awards, and re-enrollment options. Student aid recipients who withdraw from school because they are called to active duty, or are otherwise affected by mobilization or terrorist attacks, should not be required to return financial aid funds they received for books and living expenses.

AASCU supports actions by the U. S. Department of Education to postpone student loan payments for borrowers during the period of the borrower's active duty service.

AASCU supports waivers to grant temporary relief to institutions of higher education, lenders and guaranty agencies involved in student assistance programs within officially declared disaster areas.

Privacy Concerns and National Security Measures

Redoubled efforts to investigate and prevent acts of terrorism have once again sparked debate over the robustness of current law designed to safeguard students' right to privacy and restrict access to certain student information. While present and

future threats demand swift action, they also demand caution, recognizing that colleges and universities are indeed the embodiment of the nation's democratic ideals.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU favors targeted expansion of law enforcement authority to access information that will aid security efforts, provided that such authority does not unduly compromise privacy rights, impair civil liberties, or create a climate that suppresses scholarly inquiry or free expression.

For instance, AASCU supports provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 that amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by expanding law enforcement access to student records pursuant to an *ex parte* court order. Specifically, AASCU endorses:

- The waiver of liability for educational agencies and institutions that act in good faith to comply with the law, and
- The December 31, 2005 sunset of these provisions, which allows for their review and revision in an appropriate timeframe.

However, AASCU believes that actions to confer or revoke basic rights for citizens or their government, once taken, are not easily reversed. Accordingly, AASCU will oppose any broad scale expansion of FERPA exemptions. AASCU calls on Congress to revisit the whole of FERPA to better align it with contemporary demands and risks.

AASCU urges states to revisit their privacy and open meetings/records laws, with an eye to ensuring that these laws appropriately balance the changing needs of law enforcement with the unchanging demand to protect the civil liberties that distinguish our nation from those that would harm it.

Requirements for Secure Handling of Biohazardous Materials

The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 included new federal requirements relating to the possession, storage and security of biohazardous materials. Regulations to implement these measures will be developed in the near future. New legislative proposals that place much tighter controls on university laboratories that use anthrax and other biological agents for research purposes are expected as part of additional anti-terrorism legislation.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports federal and state legislation and regulation that is judiciously developed to provide for essential security safeguards for secure handling and accountability of biohazardous material at colleges and universities.

TAX POLICY

In recent years, tax policy has become a central point of discussion and debate in statehouses and on Capitol Hill. This has especially been true for the 107th Congress, as the Bush Administration has made tax reduction and reform one of its key legislative priorities. The slowing of the economy and the renewed focus on national security, however, introduce a significant degree of uncertainty into future deliberations on tax initiatives.

What is clear is that the growing emphasis on the tax code as a public policy instrument has had an unmistakable impact on state colleges and universities and the students and families they serve. Whether through credits and deductions for tuition expenses, exemptions for earnings from prepaid tuition/college savings plans, the repeal of the estate tax, or state taxation of electronic commerce, public higher education and its stakeholders must be prepared to engage policymakers regarding the nuances and implications of revenue decisions. Moreover, state and federal policymakers must take care not to pursue tax policy that stands at odds with time-honored commitments to higher education access and affordability.

FEDERAL ISSUES

HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 significantly expanded the role of the federal tax code in aiding students by offering tax credits for the payment of qualified higher education expenses. These programs, which represent more than $5 billion a year in tax expenditures, raise concern on two fronts:

Prioritization of Aid Efforts–Using the tax code as a vehicle for student financial assistance tends to benefit students from middle and upper income families, who are already more likely to attend college. Accordingly, AASCU does not believe that these programs should form the core of federal financial aid efforts.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for changes in the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits that will make them more accessible to the neediest students, including refundability, expansion to non

tuition expenses, and for removal of the offset against Pell and SEOG awards. Additionally, AASCU will continue to push for federal financial aid programs that more directly benefit the neediest students (i.e. Pell Grants) as a higher policy priority than expansion of tax benefits.

Program Administration/Reporting–The HOPE and Lifetime Learning programs also impose a significant administrative burden on state colleges and universities. Current protocols require institutions to generate payment records for all students, regardless of their eligibility for the credits. Moreover, institutions are required to collect tax information from students and their families under the terms of this program, a task for which institutions are not–and should not have to be–equipped.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to pursue the repeal of the current administrative and reporting provisions of the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits, which are onerous and impractical. At the same time, AASCU will work with Congress and the executive branch to create an administrative structure for these programs that maximizes benefits for students and reduces the administrative burden on colleges and universities.

Student Loan Interest Benefits

Student and family borrowing to finance postsecondary education continues to increase at an alarming rate, and this trend shows no sign of slowing in the foreseeable future. AASCU strongly believes that providing relief from this growing burden, especially for the neediest borrowers, should be a priority for federal policymakers.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to pursue legislation that would provide a tax credit for student loan interest paid by low-income borrowers.

Tax Treatment of Student Loan Forgiveness

Income-contingent student loan repayment was developed to help low-income borrowers honor their debt obligations instead of lapsing into default. Current tax policy, however, penalizes participants in this program by treating the amount of any loan forgiveness as taxable income. This policy is counter-productive to the objective of providing an incentive for at-risk borrowers to repay their loans.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for a federal tax exemption for loan forgiveness proceeds for borrowers in the income contingent repayment program.

Tax Provisions Affecting Charitable Giving

As state colleges and universities become increasingly reliant on private funding to support their infrastructure and basic operations, tax provisions pertaining to charitable giving have assumed a higher policy profile. In such an environment, lawmakers must be sensitive to the effects of their actions on donor behavior. For example, the 107th Congress approved a repeal of the federal estate tax, which AASCU believes will adversely impact

giving to public colleges and universities, and will reduce state revenues because of "piggybacking" on the federal tax. As a result, AASCU calls on Congress to pursue measures that will mitigate the losses that will result from the repeal.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU will support legislation that would permit individuals to transfer proceeds from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) tax free to charitable and other non-profit organizations.

AASCU will support legislation that would allow taxpayers that do not itemize deductions on their federal income tax returns to claim a deduction for charitable contributions.

AASCU will support legislation that would raise the existing single-year limit on the amount that can be declared as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Federal/State Issues

Taxation of Electronic Commerce

The evolution of the Internet and the advent of electronic commerce (e-commerce) pose a wealth of opportunities for businesses and consumers, but also entail significant risks for state revenue systems because of existing legal precedent regarding the taxability of remote sales (including e-commerce). Consequently, states (especially those that rely heavily on sales and use taxes) stand to lose billions of dollars of revenue, which will adversely impact all public services, including higher education. At the same time a number of state and federal policymakers, fearful of stunting the growth of e-commerce, oppose policy measures that would extend any taxation to on-line transactions.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU believes that issues regarding the taxation of electronic commerce are best resolved by the collaboration of states, rather than the mandate of the federal government. Accordingly, AASCU urges Congress to pass legislation authorizing states to form a compact that will facilitate the creation of a streamlined interstate system for collecting taxes on e-commerce and empower states to decide for themselves whether or not to levy such taxes. Moreover, AASCU supports the efforts of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP), a coalition of more than 30 states that is working to bring greater simplicity and consistency to state sales tax systems.

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

AASCU institutions will play an essential role in providing the requisite science and technology education and training for a competitive workforce in the global economy of the 21st Century.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Authorization

The legislation authorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF) is scheduled to be reauthorized by the 107th Congress. The NSF was created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science; advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense.

Appropriations

AASCU will advocate for funding increases for undergraduate and applied research and education and training programs in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology across the federal agencies.

Scientific Research, Health Education and Training

In the higher education arena, science policy has been traditionally viewed in the context of basic research and graduate education at major research universities. Yet, as our economy and society become increasingly dependent upon information and knowledge, the need for all of our citizenry to be well versed in the sciences will continue to grow. Therefore, AASCU members must be engaged in science research education policy.

As the higher education providers with a significant responsibility for preparing the nation's educators, AASCU institutions have a special stake and unique role to play in formulating the nation's science education policy.

Additionally, as AASCU members annually graduate more than 50 percent of the baccalaureate degrees conferred in nursing, it is important that AASCU join forces with the nursing community to address the nation's nursing shortage as well as other policy matters related to educating our nation's nursing workforce.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU believes that policymakers must recognize the contributions of each sector of the higher education community when making policy decisions concerning science and mathematics research, education, and information technology. The resources of the entire higher education community must be tapped when gathering and using data, establishing advisory boards, and creating and implementing science, mathematics, engineering, and technology programs.

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

AASCU believes that the federal government must play a strong role in funding activities to support and improve basic and applied scientific research and education activities for undergraduate programs, to complement established graduate and research programming.

AASCU will advocate for increased funding for programs that address faculty and curriculum enhancements, instrumentation, undergraduate research and education, teacher preparation, and programs to recruit non-traditional students into the sciences.

AASCU will support increased funding for programs under the Nursing Education Act, as well as increased funding for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).

National Science Foundation (NSF)

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU will work to ensure that the reauthorization of the NSF will strengthen the NSF's commitment to science and mathematics teacher preparation, undergraduate education, and efforts to increase the numbers of women and minorities in the sciences. AASCU further calls on NSF to address the financial and programmatic needs of its emerging research universities.

AASCU supports the recommendations included in the NSF report entitled *Shaping the Future: New Expectations for Undergraduate Education in Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology*. In particular, AASCU supports the call for a doubling of NSF's undergraduate programs funding by 2006.

AASCU strongly supports efforts to maintain and strengthen the Division of Undergraduate Education of the National Science Foundation (NSF).

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU believes that the NIH should continue its strong commitment to graduate programming while taking a more active role in undergraduate research and education. To this end, AASCU will advocate for increases in funding for the Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) program and support efforts to establish new opportunities for undergraduate research and education.

Agricultural Research

The role of agricultural research in scientific advancement is critical. From the developing arenas of genetically modified organisms and the human genome project to the established studies of animal science, soil analysis, and entomology, agricultural research provides a foundation for further scientific analysis.

AASCU members, particularly the AASCU members of its affiliate association, the American Association of State Colleges of Agriculture and

Renewable Resources (AASCARR), play an ever-increasing role in agricultural research. Most AASCARR members have expanded their agricultural research departments to include the emerging disciplines of viticulture and enology, as well as equine studies.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU supports legislation that further broadens the accessibility of agricultural research funds to all colleges and universities with departments of agriculture, renewable resources, and related disciplines, and will support increased funding for these programs.

AASCU further supports instituting a capacity building program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help these institutions in fulfilling an expanding role in research, educating the future agricultural work force and engaging in outreach programs to strengthen their communities.

Applied Research

AASCU institutions are capable of providing research opportunities in a wide array of special areas such as applied research in teacher preparation to discover and examine characteristics of successful teachers, the manner in which students learn, and the most effective organization of classrooms and schools.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU's advocacy activities will seek to expand federal support for applied research funding among a wide array of federal agencies that will benefit institutions and the students they serve.

Information Technology

As developers and purveyors of knowledge and information, colleges and universities cannot simply follow trends in information technology; they must be at the leading edge of those trends. Accordingly, public policy related to information technology, intellectual property, and related topics must recognize the special responsibilities and challenges that higher education institutions face in the unfolding Information Age.

In order for colleges and universities to provide real-time video streaming distance education over the Internet and for students to view these courses, both institutions and students must have access to high-speed networks. Access to broadband networks will also permit faculty and students at one institution to use equipment at another institution.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU will advocate for the expansion of current programs or the creation of new programs to assist non-Internet2 institutions gain access to high-speed networks, and will support efforts by the Federal Communications Commission and Congress to encourage the telecommunications industry to provide broadband services to a greater percentage of consumers so that students will have access to these networks at their homes.

AASCU will advocate for increased funding for the Learning Anytime,

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Anywhere Partnerships program administered by the Department of Education and the Technology Opportunities Program administered by the Department of Commerce.

Students and faculty must continue to have access to copyrighted materials with the advent of digital technologies. AASCU will support efforts to update the copyright law to fully reflect the growing use of digital technologies in higher education.

AASCU will continue to participate in the Higher Education Alliance for Information Technology, to ensure that public higher education is properly represented in decision making process on information technology policy.

AASCU strongly supports the Millennium Partnership Initiative proposed by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). The Initiative is a strategic information-technology partnership to:

Educate citizens to fill our country's critical education, employment, and national security needs, and

Transform the technological and academic IT infrastructures at colleges and universities required to fulfill these needs.

TEACHER PREPARATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The quality preparation of America's teachers is of foremost concern to AASCU members, as AASCU institutions educate a majority of the nation's undergraduate students who are preparing for a career in teaching.

FEDERAL ISSUES

AASCU's involvement with teaching and learning policy at the federal level entails three processes: authorization, appropriation, and regulation.

Authorization

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), provides an opportunity to improve the full spectrum of P – 16 education. This Act establishes a vehicle for continuation of partnerships created by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, and maintains the seamless link that encompasses pre-service, induction, and in-service professional development.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports the creation of partnerships that require the participation of institutions of higher education (IHEs) in continuing education and professional development activities with their local education agencies (LEAs).

Appropriation

Funding for LEA/higher education partnerships falls in the federal domestic discretionary budget. The benefits from these federally established partnerships will accrue only if the programs receive sufficient financial support through the annual appropriation process.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will seek increased appropriations for programs that improve and expand teacher preparation and partnership programs, including: teacher training in technology, science and math preparation, and other long-term professional development initiatives.

Regulation

Appropriate regulation is crucial to fulfilling the spirit of the law. AASCU actively participates in the ongoing monitoring of regulations to ensure they remain consistent with congressional intent.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU believes that participation in the regulatory process is required to incorporate the needs and interests of public colleges and universities. AASCU will seek involvement in the development of regulations required to implement

school reforms and partnership activities created by new legislation.

AASCU will continue to seek the adoption of consistent accountability standards to establish a comprehensive picture of the state of American education. AASCU also believes that electronic posting and utilizing the latest technology satisfies legislative intent for public dissemination of accountability measures and results.

Federal/State Issues

Teacher Shortages and Retention

The imminent retirement of current teaching professionals and measures to reduce class size, combined with the lack of teacher retention are estimated to produce a shortage of at least two million teachers in the next decade.

Policymakers must recognize the importance of supply and demand dynamics in the teaching profession, and craft policies that increase supply. These actions should address all teacher shortages, but particularly those in high-need areas (both geographic–rural and urban–and subject matter shortages).

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU recommends adoption of federal legislation enacting loan forgiveness and other incentives to hire and retain quality teachers in high need school districts, and to increase the numbers of teachers from underrepresented and non-traditional teaching populations.

AASCU supports the study and adoption of innovative, market driven economic models to address teacher shortage and retention issues.

AASCU supports efforts to discover and examine characteristics of successful teachers, the manner in which students learn, and the most effective organization of classrooms and schools. These initiatives should work to effectively close performance gaps, improve teacher preparation, and aid in retention.

AASCU encourages bold and immediate action to improve working conditions for teachers, including: higher salaries, greater involvement in setting curriculum and other decision-making, and improved professional development opportunities. Additionally, AASCU believes that improved interstate mobility of certified teachers should be encouraged through means such as reciprocal licensing agreements and the use of portable pension plans.

AASCU endorses the recommendations from the 2001 AASCU Task Force on Professional Development for Teachers, and especially notes those that can be accomplished through legislation/regulation. These recommendations include: creation of high quality professional development opportunities, appropriate certification and placement of teachers, and maximum utilization of educational partnerships.

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Accountability and Standards

Strict accountability measures for schools of teacher preparation are a fundamental element of current reform efforts. The federal requirement to publish report cards that compare the pass rates of teacher preparation programs is an outgrowth of the education accountability movement. Additional public disclosure initiatives are also being adopted in many states and school districts.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU supports the establishment and implementation of rigorous, state-determined standards of learning for students in teacher preparation programs. These standards should measure specific content area comprehension, knowledge of appropriate methods of instruction, and the connectivity of these two areas. States that wish to incorporate national standards, such as those promoted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Council for Basic Education, and various discipline-based associations, into their curricula and measurement structures should have the option to do so.

AASCU endorses public accountability and disclosure of the qualifications of teachers employed in local school districts to assist public knowledge of the qualifications of the nation's teaching force.

Induction and Professional Development

The broad geographic reach of AASCU institutions affords them prime opportunities to partner with their local school districts and communities. This range of location also facilitates the establishment of long-term relationships through learning modules.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU believes that the retention of high quality certified teachers depends on strong partnerships that include states, colleges and universities, school districts, and local schools. These partnerships should be premised on a sustained commitment to professional development, and should be structured according to the specific needs of a state or region.

Technology/Clinical Experience

Technology and clinical experience are frequently required for adequate classroom preparation and are often incorporated into the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. The increasing number of classes offered through distance education is a clear indication of the growing importance and availability of technology. More clinical experiences have also been established to provide the foundation for expanding the role of research in the preparation of teachers and the measurement of student achievement.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports increasing the opportunity for technological innovations and clinical experiences to be incorporated into the preparation of teachers.

State Issues

Alternative Routes, Emergency Certification and Out-of-Field Placement

As teacher shortages mount in many areas, policymakers are increasingly turning to alternative means to supply teachers for classrooms. Alternative routes to certification vary significantly in quality and rigor. A growing number of teachers with temporary or emergency certification, or those teaching out of field, are being assigned to teach in poor or low-performing school districts. These hiring practices deprive children of what the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future articulated as the right of every child–that of a caring, competent, and qualified teacher.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU believes that alternative certification programs should be conducted according to rigorous standards of accountability consistent with those employed for teachers prepared in traditional settings. AASCU opposes the practice of out-of-field and emergency, uncertified teacher placement.

K-12/Higher Education Linkages

In the push to reform the American education system, much discussion and policymaking has been focused on strengthening the bridge between elementary/secondary and postsecondary education, as well as between postsecondary education and the workforce. While there is broad consensus that the improvement of learning depends on greater collaboration among education producers and consumers, the form and purpose of that collaboration should be approached thoughtfully and with the best interests of students in the forefront.

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU supports the general recommendations of the National Commission on the High School Senior Year, which calls on states and school districts to:

Improve alignment of standards, curriculum, and assessment between K-12 and higher education;

Raise achievement of all American high school students; and

Provide more (and more rigorous) alternatives to the current structure of the high school senior year.

Further, AASCU encourages states' policy, education, and business leaders to engage in frank and constructive dialogue regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the education/employment continuum. However, AASCU cautions that state emphasis on mechanisms such as P-16 councils should be tempered with the recognition that reform activity must be focused as much within educational sectors as between them.

Access and Inclusion

AASCU institutions have always promoted accessibility and affordability as a means of offering opportunity and social mobility for all Americans. To that end, AASCU institutions have opened their doors to traditionally underrepresented students, students with disabilities, immigrants, and many first-generation college students. As the sweeping changes of technological advances and economic globalization overtake our nation and world, it is imperative that our national energies are collectively focused on optimally developing human and intellectual capital from all segments of our society.

Federal Issues

AASCU supports the concept of affirmative action using judiciously accepted approaches to achieve the goals of access and inclusion. For more than a generation, the federal government has developed and pursued policies designed to expand the promise of higher education to a greater number of Americans.

While these efforts have paid off many times over in terms of lives changed, the challenges of providing higher education opportunity to an even more diverse student population lie ahead. Accordingly, it is imperative that federal policymakers preserve and expand those programs that have proven their worth, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship to breathe life into initiatives that may be flagging.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU will advocate for increased federal funding to support public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

AASCU will advocate for continued funding of the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, as well as an expansion of those programs to reach community-based institutions and other groups that serve underrepresented students. The TRIO programs have a proven record of reaching out to junior and senior high school students who would not otherwise aspire to higher education.

AASCU will advocate for the retention of and increased funding for the current Title IX fellowship and training programs. Additional support should go to the most promising students and the most productive departments. These programs should also allow for a more equitable funding distribution between two-year and four-year institutions.

AASCU supports the creation of specific funding lines in the budgets of the Department of Education and the

Department of Labor to publicize the importance of post secondary education in long-term career planning, the availability of student aid, and additional funding for schools serving a significant population of underrepresented students.

AASCU will advocate for increases in funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program. Institutions of higher education can use funds under this program to support or establish campus-based childcare programs that primarily serve the needs of low-income students who receive Pell Grants.

Although rural and urban higher education issues are often viewed in sharp contrast, these sectors share many of the same concerns, such as access and retention. AASCU will continue to advocate for assistance for the special needs of both these sectors, while exploring the possibility of collaborative programs and funding sources that could address their shared needs.

AASCU will advocate increased funding for technology to high need schools in rural and urban areas serving a significant percentage of underrepresented students.

Federal/State Issues

As the face of federalism continues to evolve in the United States, it is vitally important that policy imperatives such as the promotion of opportunity not become casualties of such an evolution. Accordingly, federal policymakers need to engage in a productive dialogue with their state counterparts regarding policy priorities for educational opportunity.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU encourages the creation of cooperative state and federal government initiatives involving TRIO to address incompatibilities in remediation that exist between K-12 schools and higher education institutions.

AASCU will promote an examination of the process of collection and analysis of data concerning retention, and continue to identify useful models for improving retention. Additionally, AASCU seeks to work with the National Retention Advisory Panel (NRAP) and others to identify why a majority of minority students who attend two-year programs fail to further their education at four-year institutions.

AASCU believes that state and federal initiatives should strengthen existing teaching, research, and service programs at public colleges and universities for minority students, non-native English-speaking students, and target funding for programs that increase participation of students with disabilities and minority students.

AASCU urges state and federal policymakers to explore new incentives to

use student aid to improve the transfer and retention rates of underrepresented students from two-year institutions to four-year institutions.

State Issues

While the federal government has historically been most prominently identified with efforts to promote access and inclusion in higher education, state governments are assuming an ever-increasing role in this arena. As such, it is crucial that state policymakers turn their attention to these issues.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU encourages states to review programs that benefit students who shift from two-year to four-year institutions, and to publicize any innovative or especially effective state transfer articulation agreements.

AASCU encourages states to develop programs that promote college preparation and attendance at the elementary and secondary levels, with a special emphasis on historically disadvantaged and underrepresented populations. Support for these programs, however, should supplement and not supplant any existing program funding, and should work in concert with existing federal programs (e.g. TRIO, GEAR UP, etc.).

Economic and Workforce Development

As our economy and society change, so too must our conception of the infrastructure needed to keep the nation moving forward. Just as investments in railroads, highways, and air transport powered America's rise in the 20th Century, investments in human infrastructure–specifically, an educated citizenry–will determine our strength in the 21st Century.

Public colleges and universities, as institutions charged with creating and purveying knowledge, will experience rising demand and expectations as the New Economy continues to take shape. In such an environment, AASCU institutions must exercise creativity, adaptability, and responsiveness, while maintaining the commitment to opportunity and access that have become the hallmark of state colleges and universities.

Federal Issues

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will explore programmatic partnerships with federal agencies to promote education, training, and research opportunities that will benefit institutions and the students they serve. These agencies include the Departments of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Small Business Administration.

Federal/State Issues

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU will seek the adoption of federal and state policies that facilitate the cultivation of the human capital represented by those currently receiving welfare benefits. Specifically, AASCU will advocate for increasing the allowable time limits under which welfare recipients can pursue higher education as a countable work activity. Additionally, AASCU will call on federal and state policymakers to provide adequate financial aid for welfare recipients who want to pursue higher education and to allow them additional time to acquire the skills needed for professional advancement.

State Issues

AASCU's Policy Statement

AASCU encourages states to promote partnerships between government agencies, colleges and universities, and the private sector to develop innovative strategies that invest in retraining and skill development to meet the future economic demands.

AASCU urges state policymakers to review current laws and regulations pertaining to

economic and workforce development (e.g. conflict of interest, intellectual property, contracting) to ensure that these policies do not unduly impede entrepreneurship and business development, particularly with respect to faculty and staff at colleges and universities.

AASCU will partner with state related organizations such as the National Governors Association to identify and disseminate promising policy models pertaining to higher education's role in regional and state economic development efforts.

GOVERNANCE

The principle of lay governance serves as one of the cornerstones of public higher education in the United States. The vitality and adaptability of state colleges and universities amid the dramatic change of the past century is due in no small part to the vision and leadership of citizens entrusted with the coordination and governance of these institutions. Lay governance is a vital but fragile enterprise, one that is essential for the cultivation of responsive and engaged institutions, but one that is increasingly vulnerable to misappropriation by narrow political and ideological factions. As AASCU institutions strive to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society, the bodies overseeing these institutions must recognize these demands and be prepared to review and revamp governance structures and relationships.

AASCU's Policy Statements

AASCU believes that higher education governing and coordinating boards represent a vital public trust, which therefore demands extreme care in the selection and continuing education of board members. The nomination and selection processes for board members should be based solely on the qualifications of the individual, and the processes should involve the consultation of key stakeholders. Additionally, policymakers and the higher education community must be prepared to provide comprehensive orientation for board members as they assume their duties, and continuing education for them as they strive to carry out those duties.

AASCU encourages the formation and maintenance of appropriate and constructive relationships between institutions, their governing and coordinating entities, and states' elected leaders. Moreover, the terms of these relationships must be absolutely clear. Changes in these relationships that muddle or politicize the decision-making process or compromise the autonomy or integrity of institutions are detrimental to the educational enterprise and to the public trust.

AASCU believes that governing and coordinating boards exist to:

Provide overall direction and guidance to institutions;

Ensure good stewardship of the public's investment in these institutions; and

Advocate for their particular institutions and for higher education in general to the people of the state.

AASCU PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

AASCU discourages extensive involvement of governing and coordinating boards in the operational affairs of institutions. AASCU believes that such involvement robs institutions of strategic focus and direction, and compromises the professional respect and sense of shared purpose that is necessary for a constructive board-institution relationship.

AASCU endorses the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities' statement *Governing in the Public Trust: External Influences on Colleges and Universities* as a constructive articulation of the roles and responsibilities of those charged with governing the nation's higher education institutions.

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